

### **3 General Description of Planning Area**

#### **3.1 Geographic Location**

The Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit (NYP) is located in mid California, along the east side of the state. The Unit encompasses all of Nevada, Yuba, Placer, Sierra, and Sutter counties. California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) direct protection areas (DPA) lie only within Nevada, Yuba, and Placer counties. The area under direct protection by CDF within the unit is approximately 875,000 acres. Total state responsibility area (SRA) acreage within the unit is approximately 1,200,000 acres.

#### **3.2 Social Setting**

The population within the CDF direct protection area of NYP is approximately 166,000. The Nevada County population within that area is 74,000, Yuba County is 26,000, and Placer County is 66,000. Due to the desire of citizens to move from urbanized areas to rural type locations within the Unit, population growth trends have increased in the past and will continue upward. Placer County remains the fastest growing county in California. Even though rural development continues, parcel sizes remain large enough to leave a significant wild fire threat. The major population centers within the Unit are the towns of Auburn, Roseville, Rocklin, Colfax, Lincoln, Nevada City, Grass Valley, Truckee, Marysville, Yuba City, Lake Wildwood, Lake of the Pines, and Alta Sierra.

#### **3.3 General Description of the Current Fire Problem**

##### **Physical Description of Environmental Conditions**

NYP encompasses a diverse set of environmental settings. The west side of the Unit starts within the agricultural grasslands of the Sacramento Valley. Moving eastward, the terrain changes to foothills covered with gray pine, brush, and oak. Next, moving up the Sierra Nevada, mixed conifer and black oak stands with a heavy brush understory exists in the mid elevations. True fir stands dominate the upper elevations to the Sierra summit. East of the summit, Jeffrey pine and sage brush are prevalent along with true fir and lodgepole pine.

The major drainages within the unit are the American, Bear, Yuba, and Truckee Rivers. The Lake Tahoe Basin lies within the eastern boundary of NYP. Many lakes are within the unit along with a varied age of vegetation. A mix of young growth and mature timber stands exist throughout the unit. The various mature stands primarily exist along the drainage bottoms and in inaccessible locations. Brush stands dominate numerous locations, mainly along the lower elevations of the major drainages and in areas previously burned by wildfire.

